

# FRED

EVALUATION 2006



# FRED 2007

## EVALUATION

Compiled by:

Bryan Eccleshall, Helen Fletcher, Richeldis Messam, Steve Messam, Hannah Stewart, Richard Webster

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Visitor - Sally Barker  
Small sculptures of recognisable  
architectural structures from around  
the world made with grass, twigs and  
sheep poo in the Langdale Valley

## **AIMS OF FRED 2007:**

- To get Contemporary Art into real life, increasing access to it for the public
- To encourage innovative practice
- To help realise projects that might otherwise not happen
- To support and promote the work of artists working in rural environments
- To change perceptions of art produced in Cumbria
- Reduce isolation of art and artists within Cumbria by networking and linking artists across the county and beyond

## **STRATEGY FOR MEASURING THE SUCCESS IN MEETING THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- Quality of projects
- Feedback from artists and audience
- Response from media
- Feedback on / hits on website
- Audience figures
- Internal evaluation

## **1. OVERVIEW**

FRED 2007 was built upon the evaluated outcomes of the previous 3 years' events to deliver an exciting and varied programme of site-specific work across the length and breadth of Cumbria. FRED 07 brought a wide range of quality contemporary arts practice not only to rural audiences but also to the larger conurbations in the county, challenging preconceptions of art produced in rural environments and reassessing the county's varied assets for promoting the work of contemporary artists. Compulsory site visits made the work more robust and grounded in the Cumbrian landscape, while commissioned and high profile projects encouraged mass participation. A dedicated, centrally located administrator was one of the most significant changes to the management structure this year. Adoption by the North West Development Agency's Cultural Tourism drive added to the marketing presence and a guided tour for potential key stakeholders provided much to consider for the long-term future of the event.



**Monumental? - Jenni Danson**  
A giant tea-cosy over a military statue in the centre of Carlisle

## **2. TO GET CONTEMPORARY ART INTO REAL LIFE, INCREASING ACCESS TO IT FOR THE PUBLIC**

TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THIS OBJECTIVE BEEN FULFILLED?

FRED 2007 saw 33 projects realised in 50 locations across Cumbria. Projects were sited in remote rural locations, Carlisle, Kendal and Barrow. Venues were varied –historic museums and gardens, to fell sides, woods and beaches. Many local businesses added their support both providing services and venues. The vast media coverage, local and national, brought attention to contemporary art outside of galleries and drew people from across the UK and beyond. There were a number of opportunities for the public to get involved with creating the work, working with artists and participating in interactive pieces.

HOW HAS THIS OBJECTIVE BEEN MADE?

- A broad, even geographic spread
- Clustering works for better visitor experience
- Number and variety of projects
- Longevity of most pieces
- Accurate directions in leaflet

WHERE HAS THE EVIDENCE COME FROM?

- Media monitoring service
- Google Maps
- Artists evaluation

- Website and text (SMS) feedback
- Feedback from host venues

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE FAILINGS IN THE PROJECT IN RESPECT OF THIS OBJECTIVE?

There were problems with signage on the ground, a number of projects did not display FRED signs and as such were not automatically identified with FRED, some sites were difficult to find without the guide leaflet. A handful of projects were not in 'public' places and consequently suffered from low audience figures. There were issues in raising awareness of the FRED events among local communities. Power problems with the technology-based pieces resulted in pieces working intermittently and start delays.

HOW MIGHT THE OBJECTIVE HAVE BEEN BETTER OR MORE EASILY FULFILLED?

- Reflective directional signs will aid directions and attract passing visitors
- Signs to be considered as part of site securing
- Increased local community engagement to
- increase local awareness and sense of ownership
- Increased local distribution near events
- Individual posters for each project
- Consider accessibility in location selection
- Recompense from pay-to-enter venues in the form of money-off vouchers on guide
- Use of guide book for contextualisation of work



**Orange Slice - Bridget Kennedy**  
A 10ft section of farm walling was wrapped in baler twine to mark the passage of a contour line between Garrigill and Nenthead

### 3. TO ENCOURAGE INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THIS OBJECTIVE BEEN FULFILLED?

There was a distinct diversity in the range of artistic practice on show across the county, including performance, installation, soundscapes, intervention, participatory and temporary display, as well as in scale from miniature sculptures in sheep poo to 100ft stone drawings. The FRED model itself has shown itself to be successful at enabling innovative use of existing assets – landscape, buildings and tourism figures.

HOW HAS THIS OBJECTIVE BEEN MADE?

FRED has enabled artists to create new work free from the demands of the commissioning process and providing the support they need to realise it. The variety of locations in Cumbria, together with its scale, challenges artists to create innovative solutions. The reputation of FRED built over the past years attracts artists excited by the opportunities working outside the gallery affords. The early site visits have increased the quality and depth of the works this year. Tighter control was made to maintain the quality and innovation in projects. Two projects have been carried over to future events in order to resolve technical and logistical problems so that the projects may be realised to their best potential.

WHERE HAS THE EVIDENCE COME FROM?

- Documentation
- Artists evaluation
- Team evaluation
- Feedback from other curators (internationally)

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE FAILINGS IN THE PROJECT IN RESPECT OF THIS OBJECTIVE?

There were a couple of pieces, which had been pre-made and brought to the site. In one case the scale, differences between venue and work meant that the work was out of context and disappointing for both the audience and the venue host.

HOW MIGHT THE OBJECTIVE HAVE BEEN BETTER OR MORE EASILY FULFILLED?

- Compulsory site visits over a fixed timescale
- Background check on artists prior to final selection
- Peer support and idea exchange between artists and their coordinators
- Cohesive back catalogue of FRED projects to show variety of possibilities



Earthwork Drawing - Kate Raggett  
a 100ft drawing made from field  
stones, painted in lime wash  
overlooking Blencathra

#### **4. TO HELP REALISE PROJECTS THAT MIGHT OTHERWISE NOT HAPPEN**

TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THIS OBJECTIVE BEEN FULFILLED?

FRED allowed artists the freedom to create the work they really wanted to make without the constraints of a commissioning process. Due to the current cultural and political climate in Cumbria, there are few if any other opportunities and money to realise ambitious individual projects.

HOW HAS THIS OBJECTIVE BEEN MADE?

The bursary scheme helped artists with their material and travel expenses. FRED also provided artists with project management support, public liability insurance, publicity and documentation. For many artists, FRED gave them the *raison d'être* to realise projects. The commissioned artists – Gordon Robin Brown and Charles Monkhouse, were given free reign to develop their projects in their own direction. In addition, an increasing number of artists have successfully secured additional funding towards their projects using the bursary to attract match funding.

WHERE HAS THE EVIDENCE COME FROM?

- Artists evaluation
- Team evaluation

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE FAILINGS IN THE PROJECT IN RESPECT OF THIS OBJECTIVE?

Some projects failed to be realised due to logistics complications, which could not be solved within the period. Other projects suffered from over-ambition and could not realise their full potential in Cumbria in October due to the weather conditions. Some artists were stretched too far in their experience and their reliance on the project coordinators was at the expense of other projects. Reduced budgets increased pressure both on artists and coordinators. A couple of the projects had to be scaled down due to insufficient funding. However, there was a false sense that ambition meant big budget, when the most successful and popular pieces were not necessarily the most expensive.

HOW MIGHT THE OBJECTIVE HAVE BEEN BETTER OR MORE EASILY FULFILLED?

- Longer time dedicated to the selection process
- Clearer brief
- Reduction in number of bursaries
- Drop projects in order to fit reduced overall budgets



**Hefted to the Hill - Charlie Wells**  
A sequence of flourescent tag-cairns in  
the Coppermines Valley above Coniston

## **5. TO SUPPORT AND PROMOTE THE WORK OF ARTISTS WORKING IN RURAL ENVIRONMENTS**

TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THIS OBJECTIVE BEEN FULFILLED?

The majority of work this year was in the rural environment. The vast majority of participating artists came from rural backgrounds or were brought up in rural communities. FRED has become synonymous with contemporary work in open countryside locations and much of the press outside Cumbria has focussed and promoted that aspect.

HOW HAS THIS OBJECTIVE BEEN MADE?

FRED provided participating artists with project management and publicity. The project coordinators worked with their local areas to make the most of local knowledge.

WHERE HAS THE EVIDENCE COME FROM?

- Artists evaluation
- Team evaluation
- Media stories

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE FAILINGS IN THE PROJECT IN RESPECT OF THIS OBJECTIVE?

There were a reduced number of local (Cumbrian) artists taking part this year. This may be due to the high number participating last year and the need to take time out. There may also be the view that FRED is not about local artists owing to its scale. There is little cohesion between artists in the county for a variety of reasons. As a result, the budgets have been stretched by increased travel and accommodation costs. There were more projects in more urban centres – Carlisle, Barrow, Whitehaven, which do not meet the aims of rural promotion. Although it was good to stimulate interest in these areas, there are existing organisations geared towards supporting contemporary art in those places, whereas the strength of FRED lies in ambitious pieces in the countryside.

HOW MIGHT THE OBJECTIVE HAVE BEEN BETTER OR MORE EASILY FULFILLED?

- Work with partner organisations and artists groups to stimulate activity
- Work with other organisations to encourage independent but joined-up working
- Increase profile and awareness work to attract local artists



**Weathercube - Gareth Kennedy**  
A transparent sauna floating on Ullswater gave visitors an experience reflective of global warming

## **6. TO CHANGE PERCEPTIONS OF ART PRODUCED IN CUMBRIA**

TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THIS OBJECTIVE BEEN FULFILLED?

The perception about the kind of art produced in Cumbria has shifted over the past few years and FRED has played a part in that shift. The regional and national press no longer see FRED as being weird, but increasingly interesting and welcome. Parties of curators from other parts of the UK and overseas visiting, demonstrate that FRED is increasingly respected across the art world. Several county councils have adopted the FRED model as a route to providing access to contemporary art in rural areas and informing cultural policy. The North West Development Agency has now recognised the role FRED plays in branding Cumbria and the North West to new audiences. Five projects this year came from overseas artists who in turn, pass on the new perspective on rural art.

HOW HAS THIS OBJECTIVE BEEN MADE?

The major factor in this is the cumulative effect of four consecutive years of FRED and its gradual and consistent development. National media interest grows year on year as FRED becomes set in the calendar. The positioning of FRED within a tourist and local framework rather than an art world perspective, has increased its accessibility and driven new audiences who may not normally

choose to see contemporary art. There are more legacy pieces this year. A sculpture park also acquired one piece.

WHERE HAS THE EVIDENCE COME FROM?

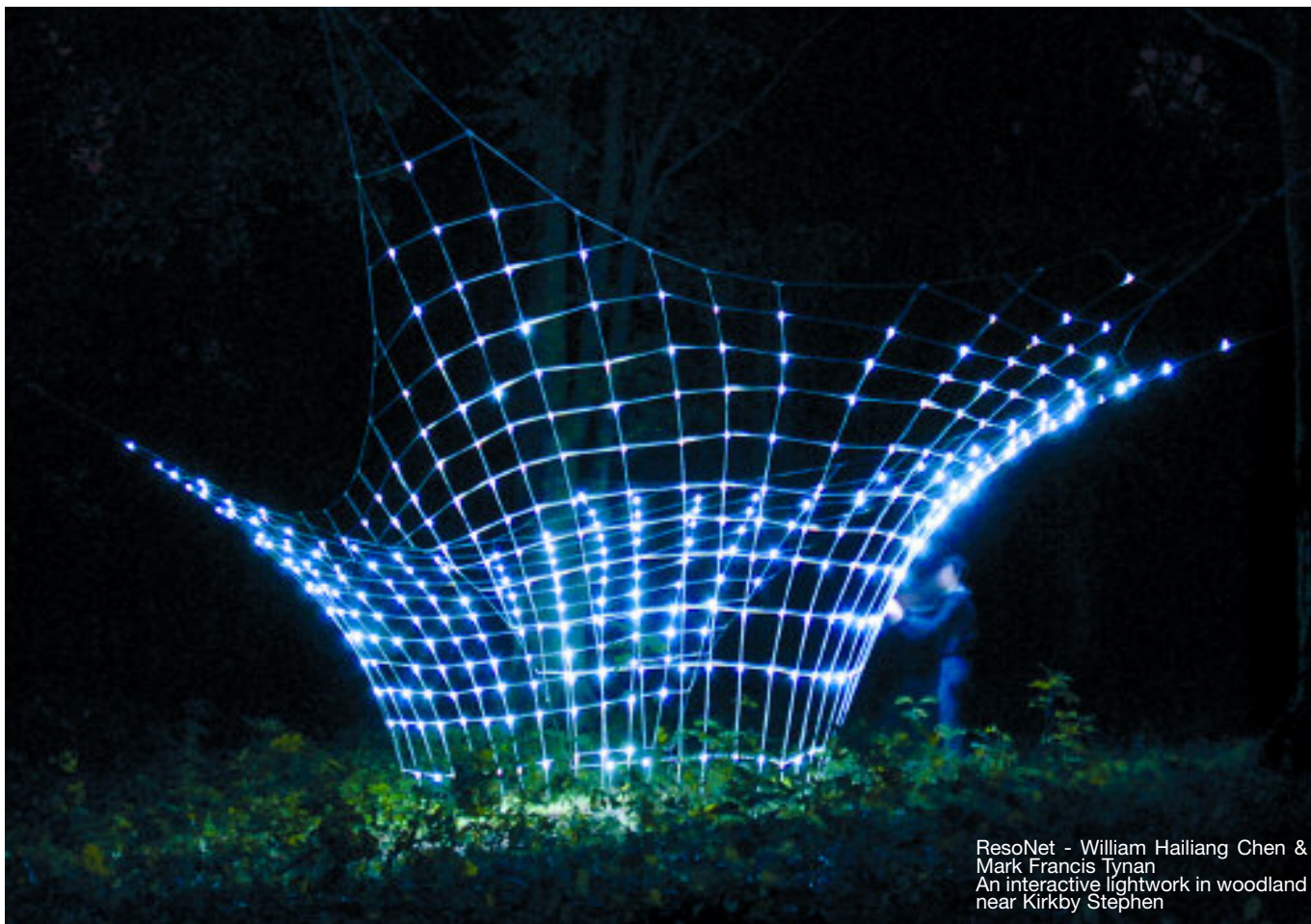
- Media stories
- Artist's evaluation
- Team evaluation
- Feedback from stakeholders
- Feedback through correspondence

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE FAILINGS IN THE PROJECT IN RESPECT OF THIS OBJECTIVE?

The commissioned work failed to attract media attention. The pre-event press stories relied on a small number of projects with strong images or last year's images leading to confusion about what was showing. There are continuing issues with artists failing to understand the scale of the Cumbrian landscape. There were few strong media opportunities on the first day of the event. Local community engagement was insufficient.

HOW MIGHT THE OBJECTIVE HAVE BEEN BETTER OR MORE EASILY FULFILLED?

- Commission high-visibility media-friendly projects
- Programme high-impact work for the first day
- Compulsory site visits
- Increase local involvement and engagement with projects at an early stage
- Expand expectations of audience



ResoNet - William Hailiang Chen &  
Mark Francis Tynan  
An interactive lightwork in woodland  
near Kirkby Stephen

## **7. REDUCE ISOLATION OF ART AND ARTISTS WITHIN CUMBRIA BY NETWORKING AND LINKING ARTISTS ACROSS THE COUNTY AND BEYOND**

TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THIS OBJECTIVE BEEN FULFILLED?

The programme of artist's talks and discussion events was significantly better attended than previous years. Accommodation was sourced locally to encourage artists to attend the final party and meet each other. Participating artists came from across the UK, USA, Eire, and China, each bringing their own approaches and perspectives.

HOW HAS THIS OBJECTIVE BEEN MADE?

There was much more interaction between artists this year. Site visits enabled artists to meet with their coordinators in person at an earlier stage. A number of artists volunteered to help install other artworks and met one another through this. The talks and discussions were centred at pubs and the relaxed and informal environment aided networking and socialising.

WHERE HAS THE EVIDENCE COME FROM?

- Artist's evaluation
- Team evaluation
- Volunteer feedback

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE FAILINGS IN THE PROJECT IN RESPECT OF THIS OBJECTIVE?

Despite improvements, there were few opportunities to network with other artists. The talks in Carlisle suffered from being finalised too late in the programme and consequently were insufficiently publicised.

HOW MIGHT THE OBJECTIVE HAVE BEEN BETTER OR MORE EASILY FULFILLED?

- Centralised accommodation for site visit weekends with discussion opportunities
- Engage local artists, art colleges etc. to attend talks and discussion events



FRED bread - Freerange artists  
Creatively manipulated local, organic produce  
sold at farmers markets across Cumbria and at  
MIMA, Middlesbrough

## **GENERAL EVALUATION:**

### TEAM MANAGEMENT

FRED 07 was managed entirely by artists on a part-time basis following the successful delivery of 3 previous incarnations of FRED. 3 Artist-Coordinators worked remotely, providing project management support to between 8 and 10 projects each. Where possible the Coordinators supported projects located in their vicinity and drew on local knowledge and networks. An Administrator based at the Fold office was, according to team evaluation, the singularly most important addition to the management structure. The Administrator collated information received from the coordinators, managed the volunteers and helped with financial paperwork and general management. However, occasional confusion arose, with some artists unsure who to contact and the office team got involved with some artists needlessly. The Director took on the management of 2 bursary projects on top of the commissioned works. This resulted in moving one project to a Coordinator at a late stage. A better defined management structure, would prevent this: Artists should only contact their Coordinators. The Administrator communicates with the Coordinators to assemble information. The Director manages the team and the event. There is also room for

improved communication between the team and participating artists, with more telephone conversations. The site visits enabled most artists to meet their Coordinator and build a working relationship. This could be improved through compulsory residential site visits at a central base: additionally providing time for artists to bounce ideas off each other and a new opportunity for networking.

An increased number of team meetings and days out this year helped build the team bonds and facilitated informal discussion about projects. The peer supervision programme was reintroduced to alleviate the sense of isolation reported by the team in FRED 06 and to highlight management and training needs at an early stage. This proved to be hugely successful and integrated the evaluation process through the project and led to more considered decisions. Installation week proved more complicated than anticipated, in part due to a sense of complacency, which developed in response to generally improved organisation. Most problems reported through the artists' evaluation related to issues arising during the install period. This can be improved by considering the install and uninstall logistics at an earlier stage and improved time-management. A logistics meeting after site visits, a pre-install meeting pre-FRED and a comprehensive timetable for each Coordinator



Beached - Steve Messam  
Volunteers from across the UK  
helped build 3,500 sandcastles along  
the beach at St Bees

lasting through install week and the two FRED weeks would address most of those issues. The 'drip-feed' delivery of paperwork to artists worked well this year. It could be improved by earlier schedules and clarification of our evaluation expectations, as most artists didn't consider how to calculate visitor numbers in time.

### MARKETING AND SIGNAGE

Highlands-based artist Gordon Robin Brown carried out the marketing commission. He created two main images based on the hidden-gems feel to FRED and its annual occurrence, which he likened to a creature coming out of hibernation each October. A local designer interpreted Gordon's 2 paintings into a variety of print. The images were used in the cultural tourism initiative by the North West Development agency and featured in the Sunday Times Culture Supplement and the Tate magazine coinciding with this year's Turner Prize at Tate Liverpool. The striking and original visuals were well received by visitors, curators and the media universally. More time was spent ensuring the information and directions on both the leaflet and website were concise and accurate, and the documentary photographer had no problem finding any site this year. Criticisms of the leaflet were that it was difficult to navigate and find the information for each of the projects and there was a feeling in some quarters of design over function.

Some sites proved difficult to find without following the guidebook. Increased local signage and downloadable directions for in-car satellite navigation devices would alleviate these problems. Greater emphasis should be placed on interpretation of work into marketable items and the guide when assigning the marketing commission next year in order that it be maintained as a work of art rather than an adapted design. Media response to FRED was the best yet. FRED generated over 60 media stories in 6 countries worldwide. Once again, Fold worked with Osprey Communications to develop a 3-month marketing and press strategy. Cumbria Tourism paid for 3 additional days PR work from Osprey in anticipation of its own Cultural Tourism project and continues to support the FRED event as a key part of the cultural calendar.

This year's application form required artists to provide quality visuals. Despite this, the number of genuine press-quality images of the projects prior to installation was severely limited. This resulted in just 3 projects being highlighted in the media in the run up to FRED and didn't clearly demonstrate the variety of work on show. Budget restrictions meant that we were unable to run the marketing and publicity workshops as planned. Artists awareness of the value of clear, interesting visuals for pre-publicity purposes, attracting sponsorship deals and securing prime locations needs to be raised.



Ghost Tree - Clive Wakeford  
A dead tree was given a ghostly palour  
near Kirkby Stephen

Leaflets were distributed through Aha Marketing and 30,000 leaflets were taken throughout the county in high-volume venues (train stations, supermarkets etc.), cultural venues and prime attractions in the Lake District. Despite this, there were reports that leaflets were hard to find. Improved local distribution in shops and B&Bs near FRED pieces should help to make the guides more visible. Early indications are that there were very few returns meaning that nearly 40,000 guidebooks were taken up over the period.

The SMS (text alert) service enjoyed good uptake again this year. Greater use can be made of this facility to gather feedback from visitors to help build overall statistics.

#### BUDGETS

Owing to the uncertainty of the future of Fold in Cumbria, the organisation currently has no on-going funding. This has resulted in a cash-flow issue whilst we await final grant payments. A business plan for the next 3 years is due in early 2008, which should ease the situation in the future. Despite oversights in the financial planning, financial controls were solid with the event remaining on budget.

The overall budgets this year were smaller than in 2006, with a planned increase in the bursary budget. This has created a number of problems across all elements of the event, not least in the

extra work required to resource projects within reduced costs through business sponsorship, support and minor cuts. Reducing the number of bursary-assisted projects could have alleviated this. The number of overseas artists participating and the reduction in local artists has led to increased travel and accommodation costs, stretching the budgets. Fixed maximum travel costs and known costs for accommodation or site-visits will alleviate budgetary demands.

It must be noted that FRED can only be delivered on this scale of budget due to the overwhelming support of the team who all work above and beyond the hours they are paid for. Most participating artists make no money themselves for taking part. The true cost of an event of this scale is therefore nearer £500k. In the long-term, FRED is clearly unsustainable in Cumbria. However in the short-term there is continued support for another year at least. In the longer-term, it is necessary to re-scale the event or develop an alternative, more sustainable model, which draws on the successes of FRED and develops it in new and exciting directions.



Flying Inside - Jo Lathwood  
A series of wooden disks encourage  
child-like flying motion on the Sugar  
Tongue Pier, Whitehaven Harbour

## **KEY IMPROVEMENTS MADE IN 2007**

- More team time
- Clearer directions and information
- Compulsory site visits
- Improved application and selection process
- Office-based administrator
- In-house run programme of artists talks and discussion events

## **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Team meetings to resolve logistics issues
- Improved clarity in roles, management and administration framework
- Reduce the number of bursary-assisted projects to refine overall quality and streamline project management
- Compulsory residential site-visits
- Re-statement of core-values – rural locations and rural assets
- Smarter selection processes

## **FRED 07 TEAM**

Project management (Director) – STEVE MESSAM  
Project Coordinators – BRYAN ECCLESHALL, HELEN FLETCHER, RICHARD WEBSTER  
Administration – HANNAH STEWART  
Supervision and training support – RICHELDIS MESSAM  
Press & PR – OSPREY COMMUNICATIONS LIMITED  
Documentation – TONY WEST LIMITED  
Design & Print - CERBERUS





**Double Negative** - Charles Monkhouse  
*A series of aquatic lights illuminates the bed of Coniston Water, inverting perception of landscape*



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